

# **Farm Worker and Farm Worker Professional Service Provider perceptions of sexual violence and sexual violence prevention**

## **DRAFT**

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### **Introduction:**

*These focus groups examine farm workers and professional farm worker service providers' perceptions about sexual violence and how it could be prevented. The focus groups draw upon the experiences of farm workers involved in a farm worker participatory violence prevention theatre initiative, Lideres Campesinas. The facilitator uses performance-based methods as tools to engage the realities of research participants to gain clearer understanding opinions and experiences in and around protective and risk factors for sexual violence. Using an experiential learning model, the analysis focuses on participant perceptions of the activities and their verbal and non-verbal responses to the activities. The facilitator recommends that a performance-based approach to data collection, despite some limitations, offers a more expansive opportunity for participant expression. Due to the verbal and storytelling history of farm worker culture, this method provides a more culturally relevant means of capturing data than traditional approaches used in academia. In addition, due to higher levels of acculturation and education, the facilitator uses a more traditional focus group approach for use with farm worker professional service providers.*

In the first part of this qualitative study, non-traditional focus groups were utilized to invite Latina migrant farm workers who were involved on some level with Lideres Campesinas to express their ideas about sexual violence prevention and how sexual violence prevention information could be delivered to other migrant farm worker women. Two focus groups composed of farm worker women (12 in the first group and 13 in the second) were conducted on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and March 22<sup>nd</sup> in Salinas, California. Due to lack of availability of Migrant Farm Workers in the State of Indiana during the early spring and the need for early data collection, the groups were conducted in California through a collaborative partnership with the National Effort to Combat Farm Worker Sexual Violence and Lideres Campesinas. However a third focus group was conducted on March 11th in Kokomo, IN with Migrant Farm Worker service professionals who have just arrived to prepare for Indiana's Migrant Farm Worker Season.

The purpose of the focus groups was to elicit information from farm workers to increase the understanding of migrant farm workers perception of the causes of sexual violence and how it could be prevented.

Participants of the first two groups were recruited by members of the Lideres Campesinas staff. Lideres Campesinas is a farm worker women advocacy organization based in California. Facilitator has no specific information about recruitment methods or group demographics. Based upon observations, all 12 participants appeared to be Mexican or from Mexican descent, female and ranging between the ages of 21-60 years old. In addition, three participants were representatives from California Rural Legal Assistance and two from Lideres Campesinas.

The major themes that emerged were: help-seeking behavior, issues with gender roles and community cultural values.

The Executive Director of Lideres Campesinas opened the groups by thanking members for their participation, explaining how this information would be utilized and introducing facilitator. Facilitator introduced herself to participants and explained that their participation was voluntary and that they could leave at any time. Facilitator also outlined rules for confidentiality and offered information on area resources should participants desire to seek outside support for any reason. The facilitator acknowledges her own assumptions to the group. The assumptions acknowledged by facilitator are that: 1. Facilitator is a university professional with a Masters degree in social work. 2. Facilitator identifies as a Chicana/Italiana. 3. Facilitator acknowledges some dialectal differences in her Spanish language word selection and accent.

Due to cultural taboos that exist around sexuality, participants were prepared for the focus groups using a series of interactive theater exercises. These exercises serve to reduce stress and increase group cohesiveness and group identity. Cultural social constructs for interaction in many Latino communities require a high level of group identity in order for the sharing of personal information to be socially acceptable. In many Latino communities, “la comunidad” or the community as a whole is valued over individualism and therefore, it is important to create an environment where it is acceptable to share personal opinions and ideas. In social settings with lower levels of cohesion or group identity, participants may experience inhibited social interactions, opinion sharing and conversation.

Two group activities were introduced and facilitated by facilitator in an open area of the room. In addition to building group rapport, these activities also established the relationship of the facilitator to the group while increasing group confidence.

Following activities, participants were seated at tables arranged in a “U” shape. Each participant was provided a small jar of play dough, access to crayons and markers, blank sheets of paper and a small container of bubbles. These supplies were available to facilitate dialogue, in addition to, reducing personal stress experienced by participants.

The focus group plan included the following questions:

Questions:

1. Where do you get information about health?
2. Which format of health information is more helpful? Why?
3. What do you think causes sexual violence?
4. What do you think would prevent sexual violence?
5. Are there actions that each of us can take to prevent sexual violence?
6. What are words or images that describe “safety” from sexual violence?
7. Participants were divided into groups: several groups of (2) and one group of (3) and asked to develop a skit between a farm worker woman and a provider. The provider needs to bring up the subject of sexual violence. How can they bring up the issue of sexual violence? How can the subject of sexual violence prevention be presented without being offensive?

**Q: Where do you get information about health?**

**Responses:**

**Doctors, community members, Books, Pamphlets, looks for phone numbers for services, Lideres Campesinas Guide, Internet, doctor, police, wherever we can get help**

Participants discussed where they went to look for information about health. Most of the participants acknowledged asking a healthcare provider when they needed health information. One participant stated that she would ask a family member or friend. Another participant stated that she looked up health information on the computer at the library. Several of the participants were reluctant to answer the question.

**Q. The facilitator further clarified the question by sharing several examples of different types of information: cards, fotonovelas, pamphlets, booklets, brochures and asked participants if one of these examples was more helpful and why?**

**Responses:**

**Telephones, fotonovela with photos, child prefers comic-style fotonovela, call the police or ambulance**

Several participants responded that they were able to get information from the various types of examples that were provided but there was a strong preference for the fotonovela. Most of the participants agreed that they preferred the colored photographs over the comic-book style fotonovela. Participants stated that they could understand additional information from merely looking at the pictures even if they had problems with literacy. One participant acknowledged that she could sit with her children and read the fotonovela with them. One participant indicated that depending on the situation a person might need to call the police if its life or death or an ambulance if you were sick instead of looking for printed information

**Q. What do you think causes sexual violence?**

**Responses: -lack of knowledge, experiences of violence in their primary family, previous victimization, poverty, lack of jobs, resources, it's a chain reaction. They learn it and they live it, it's how men define masculinity, men feel it's their right to control others.**

Participants responded that men were the main perpetrators of violence and that the social norms that define masculinity (machismo) supported their behavior. Several participants indicated that masculinity entitled men to control and have power over others.

Participants also indicated that they felt like once men were grown that you could not change their social values and behavior. Participants also acknowledged issues around gender roles for men and woman as a cause of sexual violence. One of the participants stated that parents do not teach their children to respect others and that this was the main cause of sexual violence.

**Q. What do you think would prevent sexual violence?**

**Responses: Reporting it. Telling the truth. Many people don't have information about violence prevention and we need to get more information out there about violence prevention. There is lot of different dialects/languages in which there is no information or education about sexual violence prevention. Many people are disempowered because they are not citizens and feel they cannot take action. If you are seeing a lot of violence, try to combat it. Ask for help. Parents need to teach their children in early childhood about gender role values and what is violence and when should someone ask for help. Teaching to men to respect women and to not taunt/make fun of women.**

This question created a lot of conversation and many participants shared stories of personal experiences with their primary families and with their own children. Responses ranged from addressing issues around immigration and poverty to social concepts about gender roles. Many participants stated that men's attitudes had to change to prevent sexual violence; however, they felt there was little that could be done in this generation. Participants stated that preventing sexual violence starts when children are young and that parents had a responsibility to teach young children to not be violent.

**Q. What does "safe" from sexual violence mean/what does it look like?**

Several slides of artwork were introduced to the group to demonstrate the idea of how images can provide important information. Facilitator described the artwork and the types of messages the slides were trying to present before asking participants, "What images or words could convey safety from sexual violence?" Specifically, in developing primary prevention approaches for sexual violence against farm worker women, what images or words would best describe safety from sexual violence? Participants were asked to draw words or images that demonstrated "safety" from sexual violence using the markers and crayons on the table. Facilitator framed the activity by asking each participant to imagine she was an artist and this was for an art exhibit where each artist would be paid \$1000.00 for their work. Participants joked back with the facilitator asking for an increased fee.

**Responses:**

**Four images emerged that participants viewed as protective factors from sexual violence:**

- 1. Respect-9 participants used the word or image of respect**
- 2. Heart-3 participants drew an image of a heart**
- 3. Human figures-10 participants utilized human figures**
- 4. Family-3 participants used images or words suggesting family**

After completing their drawings, participants had the opportunity to discuss their art work and explain their ideas. Ten participants elected to participate through sharing their ideas via drawing and explaining their picture. Three participants elected to express their ideas verbally and left their sheet of paper blank. The facilitator allowed each participant to select an item from a bag of gifts that she had brought with her after sharing their idea with the group. Throughout their explanations, several themes emerged, such as healthy families, personal value and respect, and supervisors/crew leaders. “Respect” was introduced in print in 9 of the drawings. However, all participants indicated “respect” was necessary to prevent sexual violence. In their discussions, participants indicated that mutual respect was necessary to prevent sexual violence. Participants expressed that mutual respect could change the emotional affect of the farm workers. In their drawings, participants indicated that farm workers would be happy when mutual respect was present by demonstrating figures with smiling faces. However when mutual respect was absent, farm workers would be sad or unhappy. This was indicated by drawing figures frowning or flat facial expressions. All participants indicated that being valued and respect were necessary elements to create an environment that was safe from sexual violence. Three of the participants used words or images of the family as a protective factor in sexual violence. All ten participants who participated with drawing used some form of human figures in their art work. The human figure was utilized as a protective factor such as family or community member in several pieces. Additionally, the human figure also represented a risk factor such as a potential perpetrator or supervisor in other drawings.

**Q. How can a provider or professional introduce the subject of sexual violence?**

There were five groups of (2) and one group of (3). Each group utilized theater skits to demonstrate how a provider could bring up the subject of sexual violence. Each group appeared to follow a format of rapport building, referral of service and 5 out of six groups identified the “crew leader” as the perpetrator.

1. Each group demonstrated an extended period of rapport building between provider and patient/client. This consisted of 5-6 interpersonal questions or exchanges about the patient/client, i.e., “How are you today?” “How is your family?” Though traditionally most providers might have a couple of exchanges, these examples clearly introduced the idea that a few more minutes needed to be offered to establish the Latino cultural value of

“personalismo” or where more value is placed on developing the context of the relationship rather than directly initiating the normal protocol of the appointment process.

2. After the initial rapport building part of the service provider interview, three themes emerged from the skits:

a. Help-seeking behavior –all six groups described various forms of help-seeking behavior that ranged from informal to formal and included friends who were supportive, contacting police and visiting service providers. Participants demonstrated a good knowledge of resources available that were geographically specific. Note: Due to exposure to information and trainings from Lideres Campesinas, it is not clear whether this knowledge would be consistent with farm workers in other geographic regions of the United States. Some geographic areas of the United States have very limited culturally-specific services for migrant farm workers.

b. Health-all six groups indicated some connection between health and presence of sexual harassment, violence and or abuse. Because health is viewed in a synergistic paradigm in many farm worker communities, it is not uncommon for stress, violence and health to be experienced in a holistic manner.

c. Supervisor/Crew Leader-Five of the six groups portrayed the crew leader or supervisor as the perpetrator and expressed scenarios where this supervisor is sexually harassing the farm worker woman. The supervisor is aware that the farm worker woman has few other employment options and therefore has a great need to maintain this job.

## **Second Group**

The second focus group consisted of the same participants as the first group, with one additional farm worker woman. It was decided that it was important to share the information collected from the first group with participants as a means to empower them. All professionals involved in organizing groups shared stories of experiences with farm workers who were not allowed to be involved in the process and that in the spirit of primary prevention, it was important for them to have power over what data was collected about them.

Focus groups are becoming more widely used with low-income culturally diverse groups and recognized a valid method for collection of qualitative data. However, due to social norms and cultural taboos around the topic of sexuality specifically in farm worker settings, a non-traditional methodological process and approach was applied for data collection. Using an arts-based approach for data collection allows all participants to share and to be valued in the process. In farm worker communities, a large disparity frequently exists in abilities in the areas of literacy and spoken language. By using performance-based pieces, every participant could participate on some level. Due to the nature of these activities, everyone attending the group including staff from CRLA and Lideres Campesinas was asked to participate in activities.

### **1. Warming Up**

The Executive Director of Lideres Campesinas opened up this focus group and introduced the facilitator and the staff members from Lideres Campesinas and CRLA.

The facilitator established the ground rules with participants, stating the need for the space to be safe, open and confidential. Participants were encouraged to take appropriate measures for self-care as needed and offered referrals for resources if needed. Facilitator thanked all participants and expressed what a great honor it was for their willingness to share their time, ideas and energy. Facilitator explained to participants that this group would also be arts-based sharing but utilizing a theater format.

### **Cover the Space**

“Cover the Space” was the initial activity selected to warm up the group and to also help increase group confidence and rapport. This activity requires participants to silently keep the floor covered at all times. Participants are encouraged to look around the room to see if the floor is covered evenly. Facilitator tells participants to “Freeze!” Participants are asked if there are gaps in the space and if there is a volunteer who can help cover that space. This activity allows participants to engage and began moving around while maintaining self-awareness.

As the activity moved on, participants were asked to form various shapes such as circle, heart and two squares. After the activity, facilitator helped participants debrief the exercise using an experiential learning model: what did the participants experience, how participants could apply this experience and how that lesson could apply to other broader experiences.

Participants moved about and there was some nervous laughter and giggling. Participants had been propelled into this activity to encourage spontaneity and loosen inhibitions. In this way participants were encouraged to explore, discover and create, which not only allowed them to bond and connect with each other but very quickly defined the workshop as a space of interaction and performance.

### **“Boal handshakes”**

During the second activity, participants were asked to meet all of the other participants which included CRLA and Lideres Campesinas Staff. As they hold one person’s hand, they greet/introduce themselves to the other person. They must hold that person’s hand until they have the hand of another. They cannot let go of one person’s hand until they have the hand of another. Participants were encouraged to try to meet everyone in the room. It is important to understand that the purpose of the activities is to build group rapport and increase feeling of safety in the room. Participants shared their experiences and lessons learned following the activity.

### **Word Brainstorm**

Participants were encouraged to brain storm to generate two separate lists of words under the categories of risk factor and protective factor from sexual violence. This activity would help generate words and concepts to explore in later activities. Additionally, this

activity helps group understand how they each relate to the concept of safety and sexual violence. Two volunteers from CRLA agreed to serve as the scribes for the list.

### **Image of the Word**

In this activity, participants were asked to form a circle. Facilitator refreshed the group on the concept of how we learn information from images in picture. Facilitator selected a word and asked participants to raise their head and make an image of the word using facial expressions. After several rounds utilizing facial expressions, participants were asked to step into the empty space in front of them and make an image of the word using their bodies. Once everyone is in the space have the participants look around at the other images while holding their image. Relax and repeat.

Participants were asked to form a series of images using words from the risk factor list. Facilitator explored with participants what “fear or afraid” looked like and what other characteristics or feelings could be pulled from the image.

### **Sculpting Series**

In the next series of activities, three volunteers at a time went to the center of the circle where they would form a pose from the sexual violence risk factors list of words. Participants were allowed to come forward (one person at a time) to mold the actors to change the essence of the word they were modeling. The participants were encouraged to mold/sculpt the actors from the sexual violence risk factor word list into a pose from the protective factors from sexual violence list. Initially volunteers came forward in groups of threes for this activity. For the final phase of the sculpting series, participants formed groups of 4-5 persons to create a pose from the sexual violence risk factors word list. As the actors held their pose, the facilitator engaged actors in:

**Thought Tracking:** A technique used to capture the thoughts, feelings or “inner monologue” of a character. When used with still images, the facilitator touches each character on the shoulder as a sign for the “actor” to say a few words, a sound, or a sentence that shows what their character might be thinking or feeling. When used with role-play, individuals can be asked to “shadow” the characters in the role-play. After each character speaks, the “shadow” says what the character is really thinking or feeling (sometimes what we say and what we feel are not the same!)

**Dynamize:** To bring an image to life (usually for 2-3 minutes) by asking those in the image to speak without interruption through their part of the image (i.e. to say out loud what their character or their part of the image is thinking or feeling). The actors are to remain frozen as they speak. Depending on the image, a dialogue may spontaneously develop, or the parts of the image may just recite their character’s inner monologue.

**Hot Seating:** In order to learn more about a character’s background, thoughts, and feelings, the group can pull a character out of a role play or an image and ask her questions about her life, her behaviors, her feelings, etc. The actor playing that character



must stay in role and answer the questions posed by the participants. If more than one character is hot seated at the same time and the topic being explored is a sensitive one, you may want to ask participants to imagine that the characters being hot seated are in separate rooms and cannot see or hear each other. This ensures that the characters will feel safe and be honest about their thoughts and feelings.

## **Discussion:**

The results from the image work fell into three main categories: social context of sexual violence, plural understanding of risk and protective factors and help-seeking behavior.

### Social context of sexual violence

In looking at community perspectives of sexual violence and safety, it is important to understand how traditional gender roles and their elements impact participants' perceptions of sexual violence prevention. Masculine and feminine behaviors exist along the continuum of Machismo and Marianisma. *Machismo* is a term used that implies traditional gender roles in Latino social structure. *Machismo* has become associated with patriarchal behavior of males. This often consists of controlling behavior towards women and children. It is also associated with conservative values where men oppose women's rights, or to pursue things that fall outside of their traditional gender role.

Traditional female gender role can be defined as Marianisma meaning, "Mary like", as in the Virgin Mary, as being kind, nurturing, dependent, predictable, quiet, docile, vulnerable, yet enduring of pain, virginal and without aspiration; self-sacrificing mother and wife.

The description also includes the acceptance of a double standard concerning sexual promiscuity and mutual acknowledgment of male superiority. Female roles include being gentle, delicate and protected. The female role also implies "comfort" and a boundless supply of love from the "outside" world. Often Latina women turn to another family member or her "comadre" or an elder female of the Latina social and family network.

Participant-actors were asked to select words from the sexual violence risk factor list which they had generated earlier in the day. Participants selected words such as stress, maltreatment, and hurt instead of stronger words such as rape or sexual harassment. Many of the terms given by participants under the sexual violence risk factor category during the brain storming activity were implied terms rather than direct actions. Cultural taboos around sexuality are interwoven even into the fabric of the language. Social norms and cultural taboos around sexuality make this a difficult subject to discuss and express even in private. Farm worker women's reluctance to address sexuality is one of the elements indicative of the use of a traditional gender role framework. Sensitivity to participants' reluctance to use stronger terms should be considered and reflected when developing any sexual violence prevention approaches targeted at farm worker communities.

Many of the sculptures posed by the actor participants display a tendency toward traditional gender roles. While current literature indicates some change in traditional gender roles in contemporary Latino communities, this is not indicated in most farm worker communities where access to resources, education and other forms of supports are more limited.

All of the sculptures portrayed male behavior as being “machismo” and oppressing the female actors in the sculpture. Actors made statements such as, “she’s wearing tight pants,” or “She wouldn’t do what I told her to do,” which further confirms the experience of traditional gender roles in the daily lives of this farm worker community, as with other rural farm worker communities. Additionally, machismo appears to be a paradigm that is socially accepted and endorsed by other farm worker men. In most scenes created by the women, there were multiple male perpetrators or one perpetrator who was supported by multiple male bystanders.

### Plural Understanding of sexual violence prevention

This focus group aimed to answer the question, “how do farm workers view sexual violence and what are steps that can be taken to prevent sexual violence?” The main findings were that many women felt helpless from sexual violence and harassment as it was viewed as almost inevitable and that women needed to band together to stay safe which was their concept of “prevention”, creating this plural understanding of safety. Women were encouraged to always travel in pairs or groups; and maintain close contact with family or friends. Most men seemed to be viewed as potential perpetrators. In earlier sessions, the crew leader was deemed as the most likely perpetrator; however, in this session participants indicated that “it wasn’t always the crew leaders.” Safety was indicated as something that needed to be evaluated in every situation or location.

Primary prevention seemed to be a far-off concept for farm worker women. When asked to develop a list of words that were indicative of “sexual violence prevention”, it was described as free, autonomous, beautiful, optimistic, strong, satisfied, nice, cordial, relaxed and comfortable. Terms used to describe prevention were euphoric and ideal. Facilitator asked if “preventing sexual violence” might feel normal. Most participants did not imagine that feeling safe would feel “normal” but rather expressed relaxed or happy. Participants couldn’t imagine real protective factors because sexual violence was viewed as inevitable.

The brainstorming activity on protective factors also contained words like ambulance, therapist, doctor and police. In the previous focus group session and in this session, many participant actors indicated that “calling the police” would be an act of safety. However, in this session, one of the participants contradicted herself, stating that the “police don’t help.” Other participant actors also confirmed her statement. Most of the participant-actors action steps for sexual violence prevention were in the form of help-seeking behavior.

### Help-seeking behavior

The final aspect of this section of the focus group was to understand what elements of primary prevention the farm worker women found most useful. Though most of the responses fit under the category of secondary and tertiary prevention, it gives us insight into where the migrant farm worker community is in the development of primary prevention efforts, as well as identifying multiple risk factors that exist for this community. Throughout the imaging exercises and participant response sections, a great deal of conflict seemed to exist. Participant-actors who had previously stated the crew leader was the most likely perpetrator now expressed that “it wasn’t always the crew leader.” *Facilitator’s note: male family members were not indicated as potential abusers. However, statistics around sexual violence indicate that the perpetrator could very well be a husband, father or brother as well. The common Latino value of familiarismo explains why family members might commonly be framed as a source of support. Familiarismo refers to the interdependence of and attachment to family members. This encouragement of closeness, interdependency and respect of the parental authority contrasts not only with anglo egalitarianism between parents and offspring that is often prevalent in the dominant society but also with the sense of autonomy that most members of the dominant society seek to achieve. However, this would explain why family members would always been framed as a source of support.*

Calling or communicating with someone was seen by most participants as a good act for staying safe. Participants indicated through their performances or statements that calling a friend, family members or other service providers would be a good action step to take. However “calling the police” which had been indicated as a good action step in a prevention plan was now being called into question because many participants felt like the police needed too much information and offered too few services.

In many Farm Worker communities, help-seeking behavior is informal. Help is sought out from a community or religious leader, family member or neighbor. These participants maintained that social norm and agreed that women family members or friends were regarded as safe confidantes if a woman felt unsafe or was being harassed by a man at work. Additionally the commonly held value of “comunidad” was encouraged by participant-actors as a form of support. Comunidad refers to the value of the community over the individuals. In the sculpting scenes, participants were asked how they could help actor playing role of victim. Participant-actors encouraged other women to offer help in the form of “being present” and listening to a woman who was reluctant to speak. Women felt that banding together provided a strong system for support and safety. Cell phones were seen as an essential tool in the safety plan to take pictures of perpetrators or harassers, as well as, to exchange numbers with older women, friends or colleagues for safety. Participant-actors indicated that it was most important for women to move in groups wherever they traveled; i.e. to the restroom, or making reports to supervisors. Another contradiction that existed was in reporting. Participant-actors indicated that women should take a stand to stop sexual violence by reporting but in other scenes or statements participants-actors indicated that there was reluctance to report for

fear of retaliation. i.e. being followed by perpetrator, losing their job. However one participant stated that “nothing was worth being abused or harassed, not even a job.”

### **Trust:**

There was a great deal of discussion and artistic expression about the aforementioned questions. In our previous groups and in the beginning of this group, several participants expressed strong support for calling police and making reports. However, in this group one of the same participants now stated that it is not always a good idea to call police because women are often not believed or there is lack of action. I clarified with this participant because she had previously taken a strong stand for calling the police. However she said that the truth is that calling the police is most often not very effective and that they provide little support.

There was also some discussion about the Crew Leader who had been previously identified as the most common perpetrator. Some participants stated that at times it was possible to go to the Crew Leader for support or assistance and at times it wasn't. Participants stated that some times the perpetrator is another worker and not the crew leader as previously stated. Participants felt they could most trust another woman or other women. They felt it was important to insist that you go no where alone and that another woman accompanies a woman everywhere.

They stated that “who you could trust” really varied from place to place. However that it was most important that they trust each other and that older women could help the younger women.

### **Third Group**

Through a collaborative agreement with TMC Migrant Head Start, a third focus group was conducted on March 11<sup>th</sup> in Kokomo, Indiana with 32 experienced migrant farm worker professional service providers. Participants of the third group were recruited by TMC. Although no specific demographic data was collected, all 32 participants appeared to be between the ages of 25-55. 25 participants appeared to be of Latina descent, 1 African-American and 1 Asian. 30 of the participants were women while two were male. Participants were informed that their participation was confidential and voluntary and that they could leave at any time. Additionally participants were provided with a list of resources available if the content was distressing and they needed to seek outside support.

Participants were asked three basic questions.

1. What was the cause of sexual violence?
2. What could be done to prevent sexual violence?
3. Did they think that it was important to prevent sexual violence?

Due to cultural taboos around the discussion of sexuality in most Latino communities, it was decided that the questions should be brief respecting participants' own personal comfort level with the discussion.

Most participants responded that poverty, lack of education, racism, oppression, and music/media were the root causes of sexual violence. There was no specific mention of gender roles or men as the cause of sexual violence. In fact, in this particular group, there was no mention of the word, "gender." In most Mexican or Mexican-descent communities, there is not a specific language or dialogue around gender or gender roles which can create some real challenges for using the current primary prevention approach in this community. Several participants felt like sexual violence was a real problem in the Farm Worker Community in Indiana due to limited availability of resources. However two participants did not feel like sexual violence was a problem and thought there was no major cause of sexual violence; rather they felt there were some individuals who had personal problems.

Participants were asked what we can do to prevent sexual violence. Participants' responses fell into these categories: increase awareness, build knowledge, education and skills in prevention, to not have it viewed as a taboo subject, teach prevention, understand contributing factors, increased resources and reduce barriers to prevention. One participant expressed that it was important to get involved and advocate for sexual violence prevention at the local level. Another participant felt that more needs to be done to teach respect and conflict resolution. All participants agreed that "respect" is necessary to prevent sexual violence on all levels.

When asked if it was important to prevent sexual violence, all participants strongly agreed that it was important. Most participants felt that it was important to prevent sexual violence against Migrant Farm Workers. One participant stated that we should continue with the sexual violence prevention education that is happening in the Migrant Farm Worker population. However one participant stated that there needed to be an increased understanding of what prevention is.

## **CONCLUSION**

The data collected in this qualitative study on farm worker perception of sexual violence and how to prevent it provides important and useful information for all professionals working to prevent sexual violence in this community. For what could be the first time, farm workers have been asked to give voice to their concerns and ideas regarding the problem of sexual violence and primary prevention planning; and to collaborate with national service providers in determining the issues that should guide the development of a primary prevention planning and approaches for future interventions in the farm worker community.

The findings of these focus groups were similar to issues that have been found in other farm worker communities throughout the United States. The barriers and challenges to accessible, relevant resources, lack of knowledge/awareness on prevention strategies and

lack of training on culturally-specific sexual violence issues by professionals who work with this community have been found to be common on-going risk factors for sexual violence for migrant farm workers everywhere. In participant-actor scenes and dialogue, trust and reliance on professionals in most communities did not exist, meaning that currently available resources are not culturally salient. Mainstream programs and centers have limited ability to attract the migrant farm worker clients and in order to increase access more culturally specific programs are needed. By increasing access to primary prevention resources and through focus on a specific population, health disparities in outcomes can be decreased. The findings from this study have implications for future research and a need for additional funding to develop more extensive services for Migrant Farm Workers in Indiana.